

FBI Informer Says He Won't Tell Lie

3/14/72
By Betty Medsger

Washington Post Staff Writer

HARRISBURG, Pa., March 13—Undercover informer Boyd F. Douglas Jr., who has testified that he lied numerous times during his investigation of the seven antiwar activists on trial here, said today he would not lie in order to convict them.

Asked by defense attorney William Cunningham if he believed it was necessary for double agents to "handle the truth carelessly," Douglas, the government's principal witness, said, "Yes, when you're working under cover."

In another attempt to prove the charge of defense attorney Ramsey Clark at the outset of the trial—that Douglas is a "liar"—defense attorney Leonard Boudin revealed an apparent contradiction in Douglas' testimony on why he was carrying a Biretta automatic pistol in 1966 in Milwaukee when he was arrested for forgery, interstate transportation of stolen securities and assaulting a federal agent.

"I was scared . . . I was afraid . . . I was scared and was trying to scare anyone trying to apprehend me," Douglas testified today. He said he drew the pistol and ran with it at his side, not shooting it during the chase that ensued.

However, Boudin read from the official record of the Wis-

consin sentencing, in which Douglas told a federal judge he was carrying the gun "so that if I was apprehended I would shoot myself in order to gain leniency from the court."

After hearing the Wisconsin federal court record today, Douglas, prompted by chief prosecutor William S. Lynch, said he was carrying the gun then, both to scare those who might try to apprehend him and to injure himself in order to plea for leniency.

The informer was serving time for the Milwaukee convictions when he met one of the defendants in the present case, the Rev. Philip Berrigan, in late April 1970. Both were inmates at Lewisburg, Pa., Federal Penitentiary.

Douglas maintains that as a "favor" to the Catholic priest he carried contraband letters in and out of the prison from late April through August 1970, when the priest was transferred from Lewisburg to Danbury, Conn. He was able to carry the letters because he was a fulltime student at nearby Bucknell University as part of a study-release program and traveled between penitentiary and campus six days a week.

During the summer of 1970 Douglas copied more than 20 letters exchanged by Father Berrigan and another defendant, Sister Elizabeth McAlister, a New York nun. The letters plus Douglas' accounts of conversations he relayed to the FBI are the basis of the conspiracy charges against the seven, all but one of them former or present Catholic nuns and priests.

They are charged with conspiracy to kidnap presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger, to bomb tunnels under federal buildings in Washington and to raid draft offices.

Defense lawyers maintain that Douglas was an informer against peace sympathizers from the outset of his student days at Bucknell in February 1970. Douglas said today that was not true but he said that before he went to the campus he was opposed to protest of the war, even peaceful protest.

As in earlier testimony, Douglas said today his first reason for becoming friendly with campus peace advocates was that he assumed their "anti-government" sentiments would guarantee that they would not report his activities phoning his step-brother.

having a drink now and then and having an apartment—to prison authorities.

Soon after his first inroads into the campus peace movement, though, he informed the FBI on professors and students, some of whom have testified that he urged them to participate in illegal protest.

After lunch today, Douglas testified that he spent the one and one-half hours between today's morning and afternoon sessions conversing with his wife in a Federal Building room where eight or nine FBI agents were present.

Douglas insisted that the agents did not talk to him about the case or about his testimony. But in the presence of the agents, Douglas said, "I said that as far as I was concerned during all of my cross-examination you had not changed the basis of my testimony . . . I told her you (Boudin) had spent an hour on a gun issue that had no irrelevancy (sic) to this case."

Today was Douglas' 11th day on the stand, his fifth day of cross-examination.

p
li
I
p
v
g